

## John McNairy to Andrew Jackson, May 4, 1797, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### JOHN MCNAIRY TO JACKSON.1

1 Judge McNairy and Jackson read law together in Salisbury, N. C., and together went to Tennessee. They were now entering into a quarrel which lasted most of the remainder of their lives. The evident cause was McNairy's friendship for Governor Sevier.

Bellview, May 4, 1797.

*Sir.* On the 15th. ult. I received your two letters from Philadelphia, one dated the 24th. of January, the other the 3d. of February. The first is a very friendly communication, in which you “*assure me that it is with pleasure you communicate to me at any time, but having all the bussiness of the State to attend to, you cannot wright as frequently as your wishes would dictate*” I will also bring to your recollection, the time when I mentioned to you my apprehensions that you were cool with me, and you assured me in very positive terms that you was not, this you must remember for you take notice of my jealousy of your friendship, all the remark I wish to make on this head is, that I should be much happier if I could be assured that your coolness arrises from disgust with me and not from a desire to change old friends for new ones, but let the change be as it may, I wish you may experience much disinterested Friendship. You set out in your letter of the 3d. of February with observing that it is your first wish to be in friendship with all mandkind, now, Sir, I would only ask why, (when I spoke to you) you did not tell me you had reasons for your coolness, that an eclairissement might take place, and that the first wish of your heart might be gratified. Sir you may start from the Idea, and think with many other superior minds, that suspicion should never taint the noble bosom—“be not fancifully

## Library of Congress

jealous, for that is foolish; as to be reasonably so is wise," is in my opinion a good maxim, that being a charge in your letter, I shall take the liberty to explain to you the reasons on which it was founded. Before the election of members of the convention, I was informed by my brother that you had been heard to say you did not like me and that you did not wish me to be elected about that time I had frequently requested you to call and see, you did not, you had meetings on the subject of the election I had no notice to attend, we sometimes met in town and it appeared to me that you did not possess that open friendly countenance towards me, you had used, in confirmation of the news I then heard, I will cite one Paragraph from your letter in which you say "*no doubt I have said that your conduct appeared to me in a manner that I could never have that real friendship for you that I once had* . I shall leave the natural comments on this scene to your own breast and determine for yourself, whether such things would have been sufficient inducement to you to make the like enquiries, but when you told me that you was to me what you always had been I concluded the arrows had come from the quiver prepared for me in another quarter; your next charge in order is the affair of Sharp. I confess I felt myself hurt at your undertaking the suit and I think at this time (considering the friendship that had existed) you ought to have seen me and advised me to a proper line of conduct, for you must have thought me wrong or you would not have undertaken the suit, if your telling me (after this bussiness of Sharps) that you was in friendship with me will not attone, permit me to inform you that when I entered into the resolution to nonsuit him it was not known to me that you had filled up the writ, but I confess that afterwards in Mr. Taits storehouse with you I was informed you had, being so much exasperated I determined to pursue my former resolution; and it did not then enter my mind that you conceived my aim to be at you. a few triffling errors humanity may at best be prone to. You ask did I not inform Genl. Robertson at the convention, that you had been plotting against my election as Judge. I told him that I was convinced you was unfriendly towards me in that respect for that I had heard several of the members say you had highly recommended Majr. Latom and said nothing about me and I think Berry was one of the men who informed me. you know best whether you stood forward in his favor or not. You ask again did I not make a stroke at you in the convention

## Library of Congress

unprovoked. you cannot mean by this that I was wrong to differ in Opinion with you, it cannot be, I do not at present recollect the question. I remember well there was warmth, but if I know myself I then thought you was first warm. You say again did I not shun your house, I never purposely did, but could I possibly make you a formal visit, when after the time you told me you was in friendship, I wrote you about your election as member to Congress and also wrote a tickett to you by my father to call and see me and you did not, and after all I had previously heard no sir, that would be courting friendship indeed. You ask did I not at the election suspect you and your friends for being oposed to your interest and tell Capt. Maxwell that there was a plan formed by Governor Blount and William Donnelson. As to your friends I will remark, Colo. Hays told me himself he was oposed to my election and walked the court Yard to get votes and sir I told Capt. Maxwell that Colo. Donnelson had received a letter from Govr. Blount, (I think my information was from Sampson Williams and that he brought the letter) in which Govr. Blount requested him to offer and knowing that Blount was unfriendly towards me and that Colo. Donelson did not offer till late, I told Capt. Maxwell that it must be to injure my interest, but as to you no man ever heard me say any thing at that time, you may draw such conclusions (as to the first breach of friendship) from these premises as is fairly deducible, you mention that the latter part of my letter is so obscure that you cannot give it an answer, yet you undertake to say something with respect to *retorting and the first law of nature* mentioned in mine, when just above you say you do as you are done by. pray give me the same liberty. as to your friends that I mentioned in my letter I will refer you to Mr. Saml. Donnelson, I shall conclude with one sentence more. To confess a fault that is none, out of fear, is indeed mean, but not to be afraid of standing in one, is brutish.

I am your's as usual